

Setting Out the (Un)Welcome Mat: A Portrayal of Immigration in State Standards for American History

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ABSTRACT. This article frames history education as a social construction designed to create a national identity through the inclusion, exclusion, and treatment of various societal groups. Using this lens, the author analyzes curriculum standards from nine states that annually assess student knowledge of American history to better understand the depiction of immigration within the American narrative. The results suggest that state standards are yet another way for public education to perpetuate a canonical version of American history by testing students on information related to the traditional narrative and largely ignoring or marginalizing elements of diversity.

Keywords: American history, immigration, standards

W E. B. Du Bois (1897/2008) once proclaimed that “the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races” (144), yet the history of many groups within the United States often conflicts with the traditional canon that has defined the nation for centuries. The

historical narrative found within public education often ignores or glosses over the experiences of those not of Western European descent. No Child Left Behind and the standards movement have contributed to this marginalization of diverse groups by tying elements of the traditional narrative to high-stakes testing.

City enclaves and poverty statistics provide evidence of discrimination both past and present, yet the message that students receive in their history classes is often one of the United States as a cultural “melting pot.” Moreover, when immigrant groups are mentioned, the focus tends to be on the distinction between the “old” immigration of Western Europeans prior to the Civil War and the “new” immigration of Eastern European and Asian peoples in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This historical approach to teaching immigration is often juxtaposed with the rise of American industry, which inadvertently links immigration with social ills such as overcrowding and poverty (Vecchio 2004). Although these references are often subtle, they may be implicit in the formulation of student values and beliefs associated with immigration.

This article frames history education as a social construction designed to create and perpetuate a national identity

through the inclusion, exclusion, and treatment of certain groups. As such, the decisions associated with what information is deemed necessary for inclusion in state standards offer a unique glimpse into this process. In this study, I evaluate the depiction of immigrant groups in standards from nine states that annually test student understandings of American history. The results of this analysis illuminate the way immigrant groups may be portrayed in the classroom and offer a cautionary tale for teachers mired in high-stakes testing environments.

The Politics of State Standards

The reason for studying history is not to simply chart the past. Rather, a common goal of history education is to have students identify with the past, which can aid in eliciting a shared sense of community among individuals (Barton and Levstik 2004). This phenomenon is similar to what Bourdieu (1977/2008) describes as *habitus*, or an ethos that “produces individual and collective practices . . . in accordance with the schemes engendered by history” (438). A *habitus* shapes the way individuals view the world by defining a system of values created through shared experiences. These values are reinforced through education

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and popular culture, creating a collective memory that is both intergenerational and enduring (Wineburg et al. 2007).

Within history education, *habitus* is shaped through the development of national narratives, which Sirkka Ahonen (2001) argues become “objects of collective identification” (179). A national narrative does not simply evolve; instead, the construction of narratives is a social practice that is continuously redefined by competing versions of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Gergen 1994). Debates over which narrative represents the true story of a group involve inherent questions of value and citizenship and often culminate in protest and dissent (Ahonen 2001; Al-Haj 2005; Hofman 2007).

The question of whose history reigns supreme is one that divides social studies educators and influences the construction of state standards. The social studies curriculum is entrenched in what James A. Banks (1993) calls “mainstream academic” and “school” knowledge, which implies that knowledge is neutral and objective. This sense of objectivity is subsequently reinforced by textbooks, standards, and, in many cases, teachers.

However, Michael W. Apple (1979) argues that a truly objective curriculum can never exist because of individuals’ inherent desire to interject their personal ideologies into the cultural development of future generations. Schools are seen as a natural conduit for the transmission of knowledge and values that students must learn to successfully participate within American society (Dewey 1916). Those in power over the curriculum construct what they believe to be essential knowledge for developing these civic ideals, yet Apple (1996) argues that this process is derived from “a politics that embodies conflict over what some regard as simply neutral descriptions of the world and what others regard as elite conceptions that empower some groups while disempowering others” (23).

Therefore, it is not surprising that the traditional canon is problematic for those whose version of reality contradicts the accepted American ethos. Those adhering to differing views find themselves in

a quagmire of having to choose between their personal cultures and the cultures that school and society impose. Perhaps nowhere is this angst clearer than in the words of Du Bois (1897/2008), who asked, “Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American?” (146). Unfortunately, such questions rarely end in compromise. As David Gordon (2005) states, “If two ethnic narratives truly contradict each other, then it is impossible for, a person who upholds one of the narratives to see the other narrative as legitimate” (371). The continued reinforcement of a common history in public education is problematic for students who fall outside the traditional canon, for as Banks (1990) states, “when [students] are forced to experience an education sponsored by the state, that does not reflect their cultures and experiences, the message is sent that they are not an integral part of the state and national culture” (211).

Research suggests that standards influence the information students receive in the classroom, particularly in environments associated with high-stakes testing. S. G. Grant (2001) found that, although standards may not alter instructional practices, teachers are cognizant of information required by the state and make curricular decisions based at least partly on that knowledge, a result supported by subsequent research (Segall 2003; van Hover 2006; Vogler 2005; Yeager and van Hover 2006). Particularly when faced with time constraints, teachers may choose to dismiss or marginalize information not included within the state-mandated curriculum (Vogler and Virtue 2007). Topics’ incorporation into state standards drastically increases their chances of being taught, or at least taught with any sort of depth. Therefore, how states choose to include and represent certain groups in their curriculum standards has pedagogical ramifications.

Method

Data Collection and Analysis

The American history standards of nine states—California, Georgia, Indi-

ana, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia—serve as the focus of this study. All nine states are identified by the Department of Education as implementing annual high-stakes assessments in American history (Somerville, Levitt, and Yi 2002), which, based on research of the influence of state social studies standards, provides the most likely relationship between information included within standards and actual classroom instruction (Vogler and Virtue 2007). The states also represent diverse geographic, cultural, and political areas of the United States, which aids in drawing valid conclusions about the nature of standards as a whole.

In addition, each state frames (Sleeter and Stillman 2005) their standards differently, with some including a copious amount of facts for students to know and others addressing broad themes that require teachers to fill in gaps at the classroom level. Space limitations prevent a description of all nine standards, but I will provide three examples that are representative of the type of standards used in this analysis. First, the Virginia standards are what Christine Sleeter and Jamy Stillman would describe as strongly framed. The state lists broad standards, such as VUS.8a:

The student will demonstrate knowledge on how the nation grew and changed from the end of Reconstruction through the early twentieth century by explaining the relationship among territorial expansion, westward movement of the population, new immigration, growth of cities, and the admission of new states to the Union. (Virginia Department of Education 2001, 43)

Then, each standard contains what Virginia terms *essential knowledge*—for example, how Chinese Americans helped build the transcontinental railroad and how other ethnic groups worked in coal mines during the nineteenth century. The state presents this essential knowledge in a narrative fashion that instructs teachers on how to approach this information in their classrooms.

A similar structure can be found in the North Carolina standards, which also use broad topics; for example, Objective 5.01 calls for students to “evaluate

the influence of immigration and rapid industrialization on urban life” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2007, 63). The standards then list major concepts and terms that students are expected to learn. In this case, the state lists, among other items, *urbanization* and *melting pot* as salient knowledge but does not explain the items further.

The most common structure used by the states in this study is what Sleeter and Stillman (2005) would describe as weakly framed. Texas, which lists expectations of student knowledge for certain historical eras with very few specific details, exemplifies this structure. For example, the Texas standards state that students should understand “political, economic, and social changes from 1877 to 1898” and then call for students to “analyze social issues such as the treatment of minorities, child labor, the growth of cities, and problems of immigrants” (Texas Department of Education 1997). No further explanation is given about any of these subtopics before moving to the next standard.

In this study, I focused only on American history courses in middle and high school, and I accessed all standards from each state’s department of education

Web site. Five of the states (Georgia, Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia) teach American history as one course, usually offered during students’ junior year of high school. Three states (California, Oklahoma, and Texas) split American history into two courses, using Reconstruction as the dividing point. The first half is taught in eighth grade, with the concluding portion taught in eleventh grade, and I used both sections for analysis. Finally, the New York standards do not delineate American history into grade levels. Instead, the state chooses to separate its American history curriculum into two sections labeled *intermediate* and *commencement*, with no historical dividing point (New York Department of Education 1996).

I analyzed each of the state standards by noting any references to immigrant groups. I then cross-checked the lists and noted similarities and differences between the states. The references ranged from positive contributions of immigrant groups to instances of oppression immigrant groups faced throughout American history.

Because the analysis deals only with the standards and curriculum frameworks

found online on the various states’ department of education Web sites, the results do not take into account any supplemental information given to teachers that aids in teaching about immigration. Another limitation to this study is that I am unable to know how teachers in each state use the standards in their classrooms. Grant (2001) argues that standards act as an “uncertain lever” that influence teacher perceptions but result in little change to teaching practices. Yet empirical studies on history teaching in states that annually assess student knowledge show that teachers rely on standards to frame the scope of their instruction (Grant 2006). Therefore, a content analysis of standards from states that require end-of-course assessments in American history may provide insight into how immigration is broadly portrayed within the classroom.

Findings

Table 1 lists, by state, every mention of immigration, specific immigrant groups, or prominent members of immigrant groups found in the standards of the nine states. The table starts with the topics included in all or most state standards and moves to those topics only

TABLE 1. Immigration Topics Referenced in the Standards of the Nine States Studied

Immigration topics	CA	GA	IN	NC	NY	OK	SC	TX	VA
Japanese internment during WWII	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Old versus new immigrants	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Modern contributions of immigrant groups (food/music/arts/sports)	X			X		X			X
Immigration restriction/Chinese Exclusion Act		X		X	X				X
Reasons for immigration/Irish potato famine	X					X			X
Melting pot analogy				X	X				X
Bilingual education/ESL				X					X
Chinese/Irish role in nineteenth-century Western expansion				X					X
Cesar Chavez		X		X					
Jacob Riis			X	X					
Asian WWII troops	X								X
Slavs, Italians, and Poles as nineteenth-century coal miners									X
Mexican-American WWII troops									X
German and Italian American WWII internment		X							
Immigration Act of 1965	X								
Mexican immigration	X								
<i>U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark</i>			X						
Terrence Powderly			X						
Sacco and Vanzetti							X		

included in the standards of individual states. The findings can be grouped into three distinct categories: the depiction of immigration as a historical movement, the portrayal of particular ethnic groups, and the personification of members of particular ethnic groups. In the following sections, I discuss these findings in terms of positive versus negative depictions and note overall trends among the various state standards.

Depiction of Immigration as a Historical Movement

When taken collectively, the nine standards present a rather simplistic and often negative portrayal of immigration to the United States. All but one of the standards frame immigration using the “old” versus “new” distinctions that describe the change in ethnicities of immigrants entering the United States after the Civil War. However, in most of the state standards, the discussion of immigration ends there. Only the California standards extend their scope of immigration to the present day by including the movement of people from Mexico as the next wave of immigration into the United States (California State Board of Education 2000).

Although the framing of immigration as exclusive to the nineteenth century presents pedagogical problems for teachers attempting to explain immigration as a continual process for nations, the “old” versus “new” distinctions do not appear to carry a distinctive connotation on their own. However, if teachers present new immigration in conjunction with the Industrial Revolution, the implicit correlation may result in false assumptions among students that immigrants simply came to the United States to join the American workforce. Worse, such instruction may lead students to believe that all immigrants who entered the United States were unskilled laborers, a conception that students could easily transfer to discussions of modern immigration. The inclusion of push factors, such as the Irish potato famine, also does little to assuage these stereotypes because it portrays member of immigrant groups as downtrodden individu-

als forced to flee from undesirable situations in their homelands and escape to the United States, which is subsequently portrayed as a land of salvation.

The standards also seem to overwhelmingly portray members of immigration as burdensome to American society. The majority of references to immigration concern the American government’s attempts to restrict the number of people entering the United States or to define which groups of people were worthy of inclusion into American society. These actions contradict the more positive, if not factually accurate, “land of opportunity” ethos and melting pot analogies offered in several of the states. Even in the four standards that highlight the modern social contributions of immigrant groups, two of them, North Carolina and Virginia, temper these positive attributes with the inclusion of perceived negative byproducts of immigration. The placement of bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) instruction, which are often viewed as putting undue stress on public educators, alongside social influences on popular culture and cuisine appears as a balancing act that forces students to choose whether the positive attributes of immigration outweigh any perceived burdens placed on mainstream society.

Portrayal of Ethnic Groups

In contrast to the historical depictions of immigration, the standards include more positive than negative references when referring to specific ethnic groups. Both the North Carolina and Virginia standards acknowledge the role certain ethnic groups played in expanding American territory and building the nation’s economy during the nineteenth century (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2007; Virginia Department of Education 2001). The California and Virginia standards also laud Asian American and Mexican American troops for their bravery during World War II (California State Board of Education 2000; Virginia Department of Education 2001). Additionally, the broad references to immigrant groups’ modern contributions found in several

states indirectly portray certain ethnic groups in a positive light.

However, the total number of positive references in the standards may be misleading when trying to assess the way standards depict immigrant groups. The aforementioned examples are only mentioned in one or two state standards. In contrast, Japanese American internment during World War II is the only item included in all nine state standards, which is not surprising given that research on social studies textbooks found inclusion of the internment seemingly universal, although to varying degrees (Ogawa 2004). Although it is an important aspect of American history, the internment, depending on how it is approached during instruction, can send negative messages to students regarding the trustworthiness of immigrant groups. One state, New York, confronts this issue by placing blame on the federal government and labeling the treatment of Japanese Americans during the war as a human rights violation, earning it the same distinction the standards place on chattel slavery and the forced relocation of American Indians in the nineteenth century. None of the standards mention the eventual reparations awarded during the Clinton administration to the families of those imprisoned. Interestingly, only one state standard includes the lesser-known internment of Italian and German Americans during the same time period.

In addition, many of the aforementioned federal impediments placed on immigration seem to focus on particular ethnicities. Although the United States began to limit all immigration during the early part of the twentieth century, the only group placed under a quota system by the government was the Chinese, a fact that four standards recognize. The Indiana standards also include the Supreme Court decision in *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark*, which focused on the question of nationality with respect to Asian immigrants (Indiana Department of Education 2007). Similarly, the Irish are singled out by three state standards as an example of why immigrants chose to leave their homes and embark on a journey to the United States. Finally, two

standards note the recent requirement that states provide ESL instruction in public schools, an issue that focuses attention on continuing immigration, particularly of Latinos in the United States.

Personification of Members of Immigrant Groups

Noticeably absent from the majority of state standards are references to prominent members of immigrant groups in the United States. Although immigration can be taught in social studies classes as a social history of groups, most groups throughout history have at least one central figure seen as a leader of particular movements. César Chávez would fit into this category, yet he is only included in two states' standards. The other individuals mentioned hardly hold this distinction. Jacob Riis and Terrence Powderly, both born to poor immigrant families only to become successful based on a combination of hard work and skill, evoke the rags-to-riches tale that has become known as the "American Dream." Finally, the South Carolina standards include the infamous case of Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian American immigrants who were found guilty of murder and were summarily executed (Tenenbaum 2005).

Variability within Standards

All of the standards in this study seem to agree that Japanese American internment is worthy of attention, and nearly all of the standards view immigration as salient to understanding American life in the nineteenth century. However, beyond those two topics, no other aspect of immigration is mentioned by even half of the standards studied. The variability may be attributed, in part, to the way each set of standards is framed. For example, California, North Carolina, and Virginia seem to have strongly framed standards that include detailed information on topics, at least compared to the other standards included in this analysis. This type of structure would naturally lead to a greater number of references on any topic when compared to the thematic approach taken by weakly framed standards.

Of greater importance to this study, strongly framed standards seem to produce a more balanced view of immigration. For example, the Virginia standards include eleven references to immigration, six of which I consider positive and five of which I consider negative. I compared that ratio to standards with fewer references, such as I found in the Georgia standards, which mention Japanese American internment, nineteenth-century immigration, immigration restriction, and German and Italian American internment (Georgia Department of Education 2004). Their lone positive reference is to Chávez's leadership. Similar ratios can be seen in all of the weakly framed standards, in particular the standards from South Carolina and Texas, which focus only on internment and nineteenth-century immigration (Tenenbaum 2005; Texas Department of Education 1997).

There does not seem to be a clear pattern for why states choose to include certain items over others in their standards. However, some influence may derive from local interests. For example, the fact that California includes Mexican immigration and Asian troops in World War II as part of their curriculum is not surprising given the large populations of those groups in their state (California State Board of Education 2000). Yet Texas, which also has a considerable Mexican American population, ignores modern immigration completely in its standards. Therefore, it seems plausible that these standards are the product of political negotiation and lobbying, and the inclusion or exclusion of certain topics may indicate the successes or failures of particular interest groups.

Discussion

Content Implications

Overall, the representation of immigration in state standards appears to reflect a noncritical version of history that caters to the unifying desires of Western traditionalists (Banks 1993; Miller-Lane, Howard, and Halagao 2007). Only two topics, Japanese American internment and nineteenth-century immigration, appear salient enough to

be included within the traditional canon. Other references to immigration occur sporadically without any real continuity among standards, suggesting that state standards largely ignore aspects of immigration within the context of the traditional narrative. However, certain states' standards appear less inclusive than others, perhaps as a result of framing or structure.

The marginalization of immigrant and ethnic groups within state standards presents pedagogical implications for teachers and students. For example, the fact that the majority of standards highlight mass immigration in the nineteenth century yet only a few extend the issue into the subsequent century sends students inaccurate messages about the nature of immigration. Standards suggest that immigration occurred in distinct periods of American history rather than as a fluid process that continues today. California was the only state to raise the issue of Mexican immigration (California State Board of Education 2000), which makes the standards as a whole seem particularly negligent considering the volatile debates regarding border security and human rights that are being waged in the federal and state governments. If Dewey (1909) is correct in stating that "the ethical value of history teaching is measured by the extent to which past events are made the means of understanding the present" (36), then students need to understand that immigration is more than a nineteenth-century byproduct of industrialization and that many of the concerns raised at the beginning of the previous century still exist in the new millennium.

The representation of immigration in state standards also raises questions of patriotism and nationalism. States like Texas and Oklahoma appear to use immigration to reinforce the ethos of a "land of opportunity" by telling the story of immigration without referring to the discrimination and violence aimed at certain ethnic groups on their arrival (Oklahoma Department of Education 2002; Texas Department of Education 1997). Similarly, other states tout the melting pot analogy,

which suggests that various ethnic groups all contribute to the social fabric of the nation. However, the analogy also implies that these ethnic groups all coexist peacefully as one heterogeneous nation. Teachers have to decide whether to adhere to the mainstream perspectives or present their students with a counternarrative that explains social and geographical divisions found in metropolitan areas and racial tensions often portrayed in popular culture. The issues that currently plague our society all have historical roots, and much of the racial discrimination found in all parts of the United States can be traced to the us-versus-them mentality constructed at the turn of the previous century.

Implications for Critical Understanding

The method in which states portray immigration and ethnic groups may cause students to question the curriculum's relevance to their own lives. As Banks (1990) argues, all students, particularly those from traditionally marginalized groups, need to identify with the curriculum to respond passionately in the classroom. Moreover, John U. Ogbu (1992) contends that the way certain groups are represented is as important to students as, if not more important than, mere inclusion within the curriculum.

If Banks (1990) and Ogbu (1992) are correct, then the standards examined in this study do little to bolster feelings of self-worth among students from particular ethnic groups. Consider the only two references to immigrant groups mentioned by the majority of the states. One portrays groups of people displaced to the United States because of famine and poverty; the other implies acts of criminality and treason. Moreover, several states include nineteenth-century federal exclusionary policies toward certain groups as part of the curriculum. As Keith C. Barton and Linda S. Levstik (2004) note, any discussion of inclusion or exclusion carries an underlying message of value that can be easily conveyed to students.

Although exclusionary policies and the implicit discrimination behind them are part of American history and should be studied, focusing just on this aspect of immigration presents an incomplete picture. Standards need to balance instances of overt discrimination with examples of cultural contributions, if for no other reason than to show that the discrimination certain groups faced was often unfounded. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act could be countered with the fact that Chinese immigrants constituted a large percentage of the laborers behind the transcontinental railroad. This type of juxtaposition critically engages students by presenting them with multiple interpretations of history and forces them to question the rationality of governmental actions, such as immigration quotas. Sadly, few of the standards studied offer this type of balance.

This lack of a critical focus again places teachers in a moral dilemma. Do teachers approach subjects of discrimination as historical fact or as moments in American history when the idea of democracy for all individuals was ignored? Take, for example, Japanese American internment. All but one of the states (New York) treats the internment as a historical event and places no value judgment on President Roosevelt, nor do any of the states mention the belated public apology and reparations given fifty years after the incident. The way teachers approach this issue sends implicit messages about values to students. One method acknowledges that the internment was probably unnecessary, but given the social situation at the time, the government actions were warranted. The other method acknowledges fault by our elected leaders and elicits feelings of shame for denying citizens their rights simply based on their ethnicity. These two different approaches to the same historical event convey vastly different messages. Given the racism aimed at Americans of Middle Eastern descent following the attacks of September 11, the path that teachers choose may have greater implications than a correct answer on a standardized assessment.

The Effect of Framing

One aspect of this study that needs further investigation is the potential relationship between the way states choose to frame their standards and the inclusive nature of knowledge required by the state. This study shows that strongly framed standards that include more detail appear to have a better ideological balance with regard to their depiction of immigration. Weakly framed standards appear to highlight only the basic facts regarding a given topic, which in the case of immigration focus primarily on two potentially negative aspects: Japanese American internment and nineteenth-century immigration.

To be sure, strongly framed standards pose an inherent risk to teachers. Critics of standards argue that standards backed by high-stakes testing take the enjoyment and autonomy away from teaching and learning, and standards relying heavily on details that students need to know for end-of-course assessments would seem to only enhance this problem. However, the political reality of public education is that standards are here to stay (Vinson 2001); therefore, a middle ground between strongly and weakly framed standards seems an appropriate compromise to ensure that teachers are presenting balanced depictions of diversity in their classrooms while maintaining autonomy over the instructional process.

The North Carolina and Virginia standards, for example, may constrain the freedom of teachers worried about covering the entirety of required information, but those standards at least provide some guidance for teachers who may be unfamiliar with topics such as immigration. In contrast, the South Carolina and Texas standards only require basic knowledge of immigration. In a perfect world, teachers in those states would fill in the gaps during their classroom instruction, but it seems plausible that many teachers may gloss over topics that are unfamiliar or deemed unimportant, particularly in educational contexts where learning about issues of diversity is considered irrelevant to student instruction (de Waal-Lucas 2007).

Perhaps more important to teachers is a basic understanding of how the standards with which they interact are framed. Teachers who work in states that employ weakly framed standards should recognize the need to supplement required content with outside material to increase the level of multiculturalism present in their instruction. Teachers in states that have strongly framed

used as a tool for preparing students for state assessments but not as a primary resource for instruction.

This study has exposed two apparent flaws of state standards. The first is that standards rarely explain the full story of included information or provide direction for teachers on exactly how to teach required content, a flaw that teachers can use to their advantage. As the

with a critical understanding of the factors that often force people to leave their homes and migrate to a new nation. Teaching immigration as merely part of a chronological history of the United States does not place immigration into a context that students can understand, nor does it prepare them for immigration issues that are sure to arise during their lifetimes. One way to achieve the former is to present immigration as a story of people rather than to present it through statistics and government edicts. Too often, the curriculum ends the immigrant experience at Ellis Island and ignores the difficult cultural adjustment that many groups faced after they entered the United States. Using primary sources that provide first-person accounts of not only the voyage and reasons for immigration but also the hardships and discrimination that occurred after reaching the destination can personalize the experience for students.

The encouraging news for educators is that immigrant accounts are readily available and easily accessible. In today's modern classrooms, many students or their family members have taken part in the immigration experience and may have stories to share. The Internet also contains a wealth of resources. For example, the immigration section of Scholastic's Web site is particularly useful; the site contains personal accounts from immigrants of the nineteenth century as well as stories of modern immigrants from all parts of the world. Many of the stories are told from the perspective of adolescents, which may allow students to better empathize with the experiences found in the accounts.

In addition, the juxtaposition of nineteenth-century and modern accounts moves toward a critical understanding of immigration. By tying a historical issue to a modern political discussion, students can gain a better appreciation for the heterogeneous nature of American society by evaluating the viability and ramifications of exclusionary policies and quota systems. Teachers could ask students how the United States would be different had we not opened our borders more than a century ago and what changes

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standards may have to spend more time evaluating the ideological balance of required content before seeking additional resources.

Conclusion

What educators should take from this study is an understanding of what standards represent. While this study has shown immigration as marginalized within state-mandated curricula, the historical record of social studies and multiculturalism suggests that the same can be said for women, African Americans, American Indians, and any other group that falls outside the scope of the traditional canon (Crocco 2004). It is important for teachers to be aware of the limitations of standards, particularly as they continue to base their classroom instruction around them.

However, telling teachers to simply ignore state standards is not a viable solution to this problem. In this era of accountability, teachers have a responsibility to prepare their students for state assessments, particularly when the results are tied to graduation requirements and school accreditation. Certain aspects of standards can even benefit teachers by providing a starting point for instruction and serving as a guide for continuity among programs (Ravitch 1996). Standards, therefore, should be

example of Japanese American internment shows, teachers have the ability to shape instruction at the classroom level to incorporate a critical interpretation of history while still covering the information required by the state.

The second flaw presents a tougher challenge. As this study shows, standards often ignore elements of diversity and explain history in accordance with the traditional canon. Fixing this problem requires that teachers make value judgments about what type of history they want their students to learn. Standards are currently constructed so that teachers attempting to incorporate multiculturalism into their instruction do so at the risk of losing instructional time that could be spent on required content. Although it is easy for those on the outside to encourage more diversity within the curriculum, I believe the results of this study show that moving instruction beyond the scope of state standards is imperative, at least with respect to immigration. Teaching according to the standards strands immigration in the nineteenth century and does nothing to address feelings of xenophobia and discrimination that pervade large portions of American society today.

Teachers need to address immigration in a way that combines compassion for the hardships that many groups have endured on entering the United States

would occur if the federal government implemented strict immigration policies today. Having students chart the number of times their lives are influenced by contributions from immigration on a daily basis is a way to create interesting classroom discussion on the merits of maintaining an open border.

Teachers should also expand their instruction to look broadly at immigration as a social movement from both a geopolitical and historical perspective. Instead of merely charting when particular groups attempted to enter the United States, teachers need to hold sophisticated discussions of push-and-pull factors that move beyond identifying tragedies such as the Irish potato famine. Students should recognize aspects of American life, including our geography, economy, and political system, that have allowed our country to be perceived as the land of opportunity for people throughout the world. At some point during the discussion of American immigration, the question of the United States' moral obligation as the world's undisputed leader of freedom and democracy needs to be addressed. The way students conceptualize this essential notion will serve as the backdrop for their understanding of immigration, exclusion, and border security in both historical and contemporary terms.

Finally, students should recognize the extraordinary circumstances that pushed immigrants away from their homes, oftentimes with just the clothes on their backs. Treating immigration as just one of many markers in American history lessens the grave uncertainty and fear that these new Americans felt as they entered an unfamiliar land that was often hostile and discriminatory. Using primary sources and personal narratives not only exposes these emotions but also allows students to place exclusionary policies throughout American history into a proper context. Historical events such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese American internment seem all the more unnecessary when students realize that these visitors wished to peacefully assimilate and earn their portion of the American experience.

As the standards analyzed in this study show, teachers cannot rely on mandated content to paint a complete picture of any historical issue, particularly one that includes elements of diversity. State standards do not represent an objective view of the past, and, to ensure historical accuracy and understanding, teachers must extend their instruction beyond what is merely required for a state assessment. In the case of immigration, presenting students with a version of American history that tells the story of all groups, not just the majority, will better serve to explain the complexities of our increasingly diverse and pluralistic society.

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